

Someone Special by kaspasass

Category: Stranger Things (TV 2016)

Genre: F/F, M/M

Language: English

Characters: A few OCs but they aren't self inserts, Dustin Henderson, Eleven (Stranger Things), Jane Hopper, Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Mike Wheeler, Troy Harrington, Will Byers, they're mostly teachers and filler students

Relationships: Dustin Henderson/Lucas Sinclair, Eleven | Jane Hopper/Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Eleven/Mike Wheeler (implied referenced minor its not gonna happen), Will Byers/Mike Wheeler

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Summary:

Hawkins is a very normal town, filled with very normal people. They haven't gotten new residence since Will's 8th grade year when Max Mayfield arrived with her step brother, step father, and her mother. Will Byers seems to lead a normal life. He has a group of supportive friends, a wonderful mother on the weekdays, a step father to look up too, and a step sister that keeps him grounded. Enter a new resident. Enter Mike Wheeler.

1. What's your name?

Author's Note:

this is unbeta'd so please don't @ me with my mistakes

In a town as small as Hawkins, Indiana, it was easy to know everyone and know everything about everyone. Will Byers thought that was a complete lie, not everyone knew everything about everyone. It was impossible to, especially if you kept your mouth closed and didn't talk about what people could never know about. Will had experience with this, he kept many secrets. He kept his secrets, about himself and his dad, he kept Max's secrets that she had trusted him with, and he kept his step sister, Jane's, secrets. He kept many things from the people of Hawkins. Frankly because they didn't need to know about their secrets.

A big secret Will kept was about what he did every weekend. Five years ago, when Will Byers was eleven years old, his mother and father had finalized their divorce. They had joint custody over Will and his older brother Jonathan, although, Jonathan was older than Will, he had less time to spend with Lonnie. Will had horrible, horrible memories of Lonnie. Memories he didn't think about. Memories he didn't want to think about. It was easier to deal with when Jonathan was in the picture, but two years ago Jonathan had graduated High School and went off to NYU on a full scholarship. Will, his mother, and their step father and sister had been so proud of Jonathan when the news had broken. Jonathan did deserve to go off to his dream college, he deserved to move on from the small, sleepy town of Hawkins Indiana. Now every weekend was spent with Lonnie Byers, and Will was all alone. He was all alone and afraid, and he didn't tell anyone. He didn't tell his mother, he didn't tell Jane, or his step father, despite him being Chief of Police in Hawkins, it felt as if not even he could help Will now.

Besides, two more years and he would be off in college like Jonathan. He wouldn't have to deal with Lonnie and always being afraid. He hoped. God, he just hoped that one day he would be out of his dad's house for good and never be afraid of him again. Though, he wondered if he would always be afraid of him.

The summer ended and the air got cooler, signaling a start to the Fall. School was starting up again, and everything would be normal. He would have lunch with his friends, he would get to spend more time with them in classes, he would have homework to occupy himself at Lonnie's, and maybe, just maybe Will could end this year with straight A's, if he stayed focused enough.

However, on the first day of school, in first period, staying focused was going to be difficult for Will Byers.

As an English Credit he decided to take Creative Writing. Normal english wasn't something Will enjoyed, the standardized lesson plans were never fun, and Will liked poetry, expressing himself through poems was one of the things he did best. The class was a long walk, but Will always got to school early, he made sure of it every day. Will sat at an empty desk, organizing his backpack before class. He wasn't the only student in the room, by now most of the class had filled up. He zipped his backpack once the bell rang, placing it on the ground beside him. He glanced over the seat next to him, seeing it was empty.

The teacher in the front of the class had a kind face. Her eyes were cheery and bright, her hair was blonde, and she wore yellow clothes. She clapped her hands together, and stood in front of the class. "Hello everyone, it's wonderful to have you all in here! I'm Mrs. Jones, and as I'm sure you all know, this is Creative Writing One. I'm very passionate about reading and writing, I love books and poetry, and so, every morning we will begin with a fifteen minute writing. You don't need to finish anything, but you can continue it when you're happy with it. Now usually every Friday, a few volunteers may read their work, but today, any of you can share out if you'd like. I'll pass around the syllabus, and I want those back by the end of the week." She went on. Mrs. Jones turned away before looking back at the class, "And unless you absolutely need them, I don't want to see a phone out in here. Alright, get to work!" She said. She walked over to her desk, beginning a timer. Mrs. Jones seemed wonderful, she was sweet, but she did have a habit of talking a lot. Will wondered if he would get any work done in this class. Just as his pencil hit his paper, the door swung open. Will looked up, seeing someone he's never seen in his life. He was tall, incredibly tall, surpassing Will's 5'5 by a long shot. He had bags under his eyes, pretty much the ugliest sweater Will has ever seen, and blue jeans. Mrs. Jones stood up. "I

was wondering when you would show up!" She paused the timer, "Pencils down, only briefly. This is our new student, Michael Wheeler."

"It's just Mike." The new kid, Mike had informed them all.

"Well, just Mike, why don't you take a free seat." Mrs. Jones said. Mike scanned the classroom, his eyes landing on Will, in his own little corner. Something about his expression changed. It was no longer like he didn't want to be in school, he looked intrigued. The more Will stared, the more he noticed about Mike. His hair was curly, it covered his ears. His eyes were brown. And as he got even closer, Will noticed the splash of freckles, the high cheek bones, and Will felt like some kind of weird stalker. He ducked his head and began writing again as Mike sat down next to him.

"What's the teacher's name?" He asked quietly. Will looked up, flustered. He had almost forgotten what her name was, since Mike began talking to him.

"Mrs. Jones." Will told him, keeping his tone equally quiet. "We're supposed to write something and share it out within fifteen minutes, but I'm more of an artist than a writer." He said shyly, looking back down. Why had he told him that? Will usually didn't tell people about his art, they just knew.

"Well, writing is a form of art. You just need practice like every other skill in life." Mike assured him. He seemed to stay quiet for a beat, before he spoke up again. "What's your name?"

"Will. Um- Will Byers." Will answered, giving a nervous smile before ducking his head back down. When he wished for new friends, he did not mean talking to someone he didn't know about basically nothing. Will suddenly wished he could take back his own wish of new friends, and maybe replace it with something else. Like getting a new pair of shoes, or getting his license finally, He did not know it involved a new kid with a cute face, a cute voice, and a nice personality.

"Well Will Byers, I better start working." Mike said. And that was all he said, for the rest of the class period. Granted, Will didn't strike up a conversation, but he was intimidated. He was intimidated by Max when she had been new, and Max had become one of his best friends. Arguably his closest. Though Mike was cute, and it made talking to him difficult. Especially when Will knew they would never work. With Will's. well, lack of being out, and Mike's most likely to be straight, Will had no chance with him anyways.

Lunch rolled around after fourth period, and Will found his usual table. Will sat down, taking his sacked lunch his mother had made for him this morning. Jane sat down next to him, copying him in taking out her own lunch. The briefly checked it.

"Huh, breakfast sandwich, sausage, eggs, and bacon sandwiched between two waffles." Will noted.

"Crustless peanut butter and jelly." Jane looked over at Will. The both rolled up their paper bags and switched lunches, before breaking out into giggles.

"Hey wonder twins." a familiar female voice greeted. Will looked up, seeing Max. He smiled up at her.

"Maxie." Will grinned as she plopped down beside Will, before giving him a judgmental look.

"Not my name." She huffed.

"And Jane isn't my twin sister, but I'm not correcting you." Will shrugged, taking a small bite of his sandwich.

To his right, Jane shrugged. "We might as well be. We're step siblings and we look almost identical." She pointed out.

Will shrugged. "Maybe if i curled my hair to match your natural locks, I could finally be as beautiful as Jane Eleanor Hopper." Will smiled, leaning against Jane. She laughed before shoving him gently.

"Don't full name me, William." Jane teased.

"Is it bully Will Byers day? I'm sure there are many people who would love to join in on this special day." Will rolled his eyes with a smile. He loved Jane and Max, and it was obvious to him Jane and Max loved each other. Or at least liked each other in that sense. Will knew how Max felt, and he's known Jane long enough to sense when she was interested in someone romantically. At this point, Will didn't understand how the two girls could be so oblivious.

The next person to join the table was Dustin, a long time best friend of Will's, well, one of two. He sat down with a school bought lunch, the tray making a clattering noise as he sat across from Max. "It's bully Will Byers day already? I thought that didn't come for another week." Dustin teased. Will rolled his eyes with a grin on his face.

"Oh, haven't you heard?" Max smirked, crossing her arms.

"Oh great, we're using that meme on a daily occurrence now." Dustin rolled his eyes.

"It is the fourth day in a row if you count all the texts." Jane nodded. Will gawked at Jane for a second before dissolving into a knowing

smile. "You keep score?"

Jane simply shrugged, ignoring the look he was giving. "To pass the time." she answered simply.

Suddenly, Lucas came back into view, only this time he wasn't alone. In fact, he had someone walking next to him. Wearing the sweater Will was met with this morning and-

It was him.

"Guys, hey, this is Mike, he's new, and I've decided he's cool and one of us." Lucas patted Mike on the back, who awkwardly waved at the four already seated. He locked eyes with Will, before sitting down across from Jane and breaking eye contact from Will.

Jane glanced over at Will, a coy smile on her lips. She nodded him closer, wanting to tell him something. Will obliged, leaning in to hear better. "You know, Mike looks kind of cute." she whispered. Unbeknownst to the step siblings, both of them looked over at Mike at the same time, Will, flushed with embarrassment, and Jane, still had that smile on her face. Mike shot the both a grin and a wink, Will turning away. Will glanced over at Max who was staring so hard she could burn holes into Mike's head. Will gently elbowed her to get her out of whatever jealous-rage trance she was in, and it seemed to have worked.

Will pulled himself back into conversation.

"We are so cool enough to recruit people!" Lucas argued with Dustin.

"We're the nerds of Hawkins High, you might as well just set the kid up to have no friends instead." Dustin crossed his arms.

"I would rather be friends with nerds instead of friends with no one." Mike chimed in, obviously getting irritated with their bickering. That was something Will could easily relate too. He bit back a smile before turning to Max.

"So anyways," he began, "What classes do you have?" Will asked. Max groaned taking her schedule out of her pocket and laying it on the table.

"first period is math, which should not be allowed, Mr. Kole is a fucking asshole already and starting off every morning with him is going to be my personal hell." Max began. She listed off the rest of her classes, and the two had fourth and sixth together upon further inspection. Fourth period was Painting Studio, which Will had convinced Max to take, and their last period, sixth, was US history.

"Hold on, what teacher do you guys have for History?" Mike asked.

Max looked up at him and glared. "None of your fucking business."

she snapped, obviously not over his flirting with Jane.

"Max." Will said quietly. she huffed, slouching a bit and muttering an apology. "Mr. Hawthorne." he answered with a smile.

"Awesome, I have him for sixth too." Mike grinned back. Will felt a heat rise to his cheeks and he looked away before the bell rang. Max grabbed Will's hand.

"We have to go to art now." she said pointedly.

"Max, I haven't thrown away my trash." Will sighed, standing up with her anyways. She was a few inches shorter than him, although she was still the most intimidating person on the planet.

"I have a few people you can throw it at." she glanced at Mike.

"Max!" Will hissed.

"What, what? I'm joking, you know my humor. Ha ha ha." she rolled her eyes.

"I'll see you at home, Jane." Will smiled gently to his sister. Max seemed to soften when she saw her, but looked back at Mike and her gaze hardened again.

"Yeah later." Max huffed out. And before Jane could respond to either of them, Max was dragging Will to the nearest trash can and out of the cafeteria.

"You know, the way you acted today at lunch was really rude." Will told Max. Usually, Painting Studio was his favorite classes to take. He had already taken one and two, so he was put back into Painting Studio One with Max, and a bunch of freshman. He liked painting, the colors in the canvas, the smell of fresh paint, clean brushes, the painted smocks, he loved everything about painting. He loved art, in fact, and was taking 3D design as well.

"I don't trust him." Max huffed, putting a bit of red paint on her canvas. "Did you see his sweater? He dresses like a hetero." she sneered.

"So?" Will shrugged.

"So our squad is full of the only gays in this fucking school!" Max exclaimed.

"Keep your voice down, you lesbian." Will whispered.

"Well, it's true, even if we aren't all out." Max rolled her eyes.

"You mean none of us?" He asked.

"I have an impeccable gaydar, and Mike is either straight or a badly dressed bisexual." Max informed him, splattering some blue onto her canvas. Will gently brushed dark green onto his own, and smiled a

bit. "What? Why are you so smiley now?" Max asked.

Will looked over to her and shrugged. "Maybe he wasn't winking at Jane." he offered up.

"Will, he's straight." Max deadpanned.

"Or a badly dressed bisexual, we don't know." Will shrugged again, smiling to himself.

Max turned back to her painting, "Well he's only spoken to you once. And it was about school." she pointed out, obviously unhappy with what Will was saying.

"Twice, we have first period together." Will replied.

Max scoffed, "Oh how sweet, starting and ending your day with someone you shouldn't be putting so much faith in considering you just met him and barely know his name." she said with a fake sugary tone that hid her bitterness.

"Look, let me have my pointless crush. It's not going to get anywhere." Will sighed.

"I'm not trying to act like a complete bitch to you. I'm trying to talk sense into you. I don't want you getting hurt." Max said gently. "You're my best friend, and all three times I've seen you cry, it makes me vow not to let there be a fourth. I just care, really fiercely."

"Very fiercely." Will corrected. "I get it. You're my best friend too, and I promise I will be as distant as possible." Will smiled.

Max shook her head before speaking again, "Don't make a promise you won't be able to keep. We all know they're important to Jane, and so they're important to me too."

"You really like her, don't you?" Will asked, tilting his head.

"I think I'm in love." Max mumbled.

Will's smile grew, "Max! You have to say something to her, that's incredible!" he encouraged, keeping every fiber of his body from jumping up and down. He knew Jane felt the same way, and there wasn't a doubt in his mind that it wasn't true.

Max scoffed, "Well I was, but then Mike came in and swept her off her feet." She spat. Max looked away from her painting. "Will, I'm serious. I want to tell her, because not being with her is starting to physically hurt me. That's when you know it's gone too far." She paused, "But I can't risk it. I can't risk messing things up with her and I can't risk anyone at home knowing." Max tore her eyes away from Will, wiping under them, probably in an attempt to stop any tears.

"I know Maxie." Will spoke softly, placing a hand on her shoulder, "I know you can't say anything to them, but trust me. You can say

something to her.”

Max looked up at him and shrugged. “You know I can’t.” She sniffled.

“You can try. When you’re ready.” Will offered. Max nodded.

“Yeah.” She whispered, clearing her throat. “When I’m ready.”

Fifth period came and went, and it was time for Will’s last class of the day, History. Will considered himself to be good at History, all it was is studying a few people who have already passed. It really wasn’t that much of anything. Will walked into his classroom, seeing Mike and Max already sitting at a table group. There were two other people he recognized as Heather and Evan, two twins who were the exact opposite of each other. Heather looking as annoyed as Max, and Evan looking anxious. Will took a free seat across from Max. He hadn’t even bothered looking at Mike yet, but he could feel his eyes burning into him. Will tried not to pay much attention to it. “What have I missed?” Will asked the group.

“Well,” Heather spoke first, sitting up straighter in her seat. “Old new kid has been battling the new new kid for dominance.” She explained.

“Shut up Heather.” Max snapped.

“You’re already fighting? Really you two? It’s been three minutes.”

Will looked at both of them expectantly.

“Well, she started it.” Mike shrugged.

“I didn’t ask you.” Will said, using the tone of voice his mother used when she was frustrated, which was a rare occurrence they both shared. “Max, we talked about this. Just be nice to him.”

“I don’t like new people, so sue me.” She crossed her arms.

Will scowled, hearing the bell ring, meaning class had started. Mr. Hawthorne was his history teacher as a Sophomore as well, so he already knew everything that he was saying. Mr. Hawthorne was nice, Will figured out that surprisingly he wanted to be a math teacher, but they had given him history instead, but it worked out since he was a major history buff. Then, they were given icebreaker questions.

Mike glanced at the board. “Um, okay. I’m Mike, and if I was a vegetable I would be a tomato.” He shrugged.

“That’s a fruit.” Max crossed her arms.

“Well it’s been confused for a vegetable, which is why I’m choosing it.” Mike shot back. Well, that made absolutely no sense.

“You’re saying your a fruit being confused for a vegetable?” Heather

asked, brushing some of her dark hair out of her eyes.

"Sometimes that's what it feels like." Mike shrugged. It still made no sense to Will.

"I'm Max." Max said annoyed.

"You have to answer the question." Evan pointed out. Max just glanced at the board, the question reading If you awoke one day as a flower, what flower would you choose to be?

"No, I'm good." She shook her head.

Heather went next. "I'm Heather, and," She shuffled a bit, taking her hand out of her pocket. She opened it to reveal a bracelet. "This is the most important thing I have on me." She grinned.

"Why is it important?" Mike asked.

"Because a cute girl gave it to me." Heather smirked, flipping a few of the beads to show a phone number. "She lives all the way in Illinois, I met her over summer." Heather explained, putting it back in her pocket.

Evan just nodded, "Okay well, Hi, I'm Evan."

"Hii Evan." Heather replied sarcastically.

"Shut up. If I had one wish it would be 'I wish I was an only child'."

Evan rolled his eyes, smiling at Heather.

"Keep on wishing, little bro." Heather shrugged, unfazed by his comment.

Now it was Will's turn. He glanced at the board, seeing his question.

"I'm Will, and if I could own one item I don't already have it would be," He thought for a moment, "A new chalk set, since all my chalk is broken."

"Street chalk?" Heather asked.

"Art chalk." Will answered with a smile.

And it went on like that. All of them answering questions about themselves, friendly bickering from Evan and Heather, not-so-friendly bickering from Max and Mike, and Will trying to simmer Max down before she got out of hand. A rush of relief came when the bell rang, and he stood up in his seat, Max already leaving. Mike touched his shoulder, gaining attention immediately. "I got invited to a party. Someone named Troy is throwing it." Mike said, "Can you tell the group? I'm not so fond of making announcements." He smiled a bit.

His smile was beautiful, and Will could stare at Mike Wheeler smiling all day long. "Yeah, I'll be sure too." Will nodded. Mike walked away and his sentence fully processed. "Wait, Troy?" Will asked, but Mike was already gone. He got all his things packed up and left to meet

Jane so they could drive home together. A Troy Harrington party was definitely going to screw up his Junior year. Will could feel it.

2. Cupsies?

Summary for the Chapter:

hard2bthebard: WE'RE FUCKIGN SCREWED IS
WHAT WE ARE FJKRJFKDUF

Notes for the Chapter:

john mulaney voice I tolerate any treatment. Like I write fics sometimes, and I'll put up with anything. I'll start a fic on some garbage website but something gets in the way - you know, I don't wanna name an actual something so let's just make it up; let's call it 'Depression.' So I'll start having a week long depressive and I'll start writing and I'll go, 'Can I get some inspiration for this fic please?' And they go, 'No. Your going to cry over problems.' And I go, 'Okaaay!' And then I go to the bathroom. And then I come out of the bathroom and I go, 'Any updates?' and they go 'Yeah, you may have just finished crying like a bitch but you're going to keep crying because I say so. Now take this paragraph of the fic you'll edit out anyways, go, fetch!' And I go 'Okaaay!' and I go and begin writing and go, 'Can I finish this chapter please?' and they go 'NO!' And I go 'Okaaay!' And they go, 'You're a little fat girl, aren't you?' And I go 'Nooo,' and they go 'SAY IT!' and I go 'I'm a little fat girl.' And then I go over to my therapist, which is an oxymoron, and I go, 'Can you please help me out of one of my longest depressive episodes yet?' and they go 'No! In fact, I'm gonna frame you for murder! And you're gonna go to jail for thirty years!' And I go 'Why are you doing this to me?!' And they go, 'Because it's mental illness, and life is a fucking nightmare!'

But with some dopamine, it says 'Let's finish this fic chapter in a few days and update a day later than planned.' So it's better.

As soon as Will left his history classroom, he knew he was in trouble. The impending doom that he faced if he and his friends went to that party was something definite. Mike didn't know any better. Obviously he didn't, it's his first day of school, possibly his first day in Hawkins. There was no way he could know what Troy Harrington was like. Not like Will wanted to tell him, but if he and his friends went to that party, they were fucked. Will knew that, it was a rational thought. Though Mike had seemed happy that on his first day he was invited to a party. And he wanted his new friends there with him. Will couldn't lie to him about telling the others either, so he would tell them. He had too, if Mike was his friend now, he had to tell them like he said he would.

The demogorgon wouldn't treat me like this

WillWise: Heyy guysss

madmax: oh no something happened in the 4 minutes i was gone

hard2bthebard: max its prob fine! what is it will

WillWise: Mike got invited to a party! And we're all going!

JaneMage: Oh, this is good news

madmax: no its not

WillWise: No it's not

Rangerdanger: Oh fuck. Max go first and tell us why its not good news.

madmax: mike is a het, he's rude, he's awful, he's inconsiderate, he's new in town, he needs to die, shall i go on

Rangerdanger: I should have known you were going to be a complete asshole about this. Will tell us why it's actually some bad news.

WillWise: Troy Harrington is throwing the party?

hard2bthebard: OHHHHH FUCKING SHITTTTTT

WillWise: It isn't going to end well.

Rangerdanger: ...Tell him we all caught the flu

JaneMage: Okay, i'm the only one who sees this as a good thing. Troy hasn't messed with us since freshman year

madmax: all thnks to u <3

JaneMage: No, i'm upset with you

madmax: D:

madmax: BUT WHY

JaneMage: Mike seems very nice and is really funny. We have fifth period together ad the whole time he was very pleasant to be around. You aren't giving him a chance and we all know you don't actually hate straight people, so there's no reason for you acting like a complete bitch to him

WillWise: You know she's right Max it's what I've been telling you.

madmax: whatever fine. Lets go to this stupid party.

hard2bthebard: its TROYS PARTY and he HATES US

Rangerdanger: Yeah idk guys its risky

hard2bthebard: just risky???? JUST RISKY?????? LUCAS WE WILL DIE

WillWise: Maybe he won't see us

JaneMage: Let's all vote now. Everyone who wants to go.

madmax: whatever yeah

WillWise: Doesn't hurt to try

JaneMage: Three against two, we're going.

JaneMage: We'll tell Mike at lunch tomorrow

WillWise: I'll just bring it up in first tomorrow

Rangerdanger: Or i can text him??

JaneMage: How did we miss that option? Yeah, just text him.

Rangerdanger: On it, even though i think this is risky.

hard2bthebard: WE'RE FUCKIGN SCREWED IS WHAT WE ARE
FJKRJFKDUF

JaneMage: It'll be fine

The next day, Mike had gotten to class before Will. It was a Thursday, and the group had figured out that the party was on Friday night. Will was incredibly nervous already, and he really didn't have much of a reason to be.

Right?

Nevertheless, Will sat down in the spot he was seated in on the previous day, taking out his sketchbook and continuing the drawing he had started at home. He didn't notice Mike was watching him draw, usually when Will began drawing he got lost in it. He lost himself in the pencil hitting the page, the detailed scribbling, the sound of the lead scratching into the page, all of it completely captured Will into a trance-like state. Drawing is what calmed him, what made him happy, how he got his anger or sadness out, it was something he just did.

"Wow, you really are an artist." Mike's voice gently cut Will out of the trance. In an instant, the smaller teenager shot up, being brought back into reality, before laughing at himself for overreacting so much.

"Sorry, I just will never get used to people doing that." Will smiled. He noticed the confused look on Mike's face and Will sputtered a bit before forming a complete sentence, "People pulling me out of the

moment. It's like I get into a little bubble of my own, and I just kind of get lost in drawing, or painting, or whatever I'm doing." He laughed a bit.

Mike nodded softly, "I get it." He smiled. "I'm like that with writing. I love telling stories, you know? It's always been my thing."

Will grinned back, about to reply, but getting cut off by the bell, followed immediately by Mrs. Jones talking.

"Good morning Juniors! Fifteen minute write, no talking. Pencil's up!" She cheered, and Will swore, he had no idea how anyone could be so cheery in the morning. Will took out a separate notebook and got to writing. As he was getting it out of his bag, he noticed Mike really was in that trance Will was in earlier. Will smiled to himself and picked up his pencil. He wrote of a story based of the drawing he had done, but he knew that it wasn't good, it couldn't be. The class had been working on poems the whole week, but poetry was never easy for Will. Will stuck to short stories possible. for his quick write, rather than the poetry everyone else was most likely doing. As he wrote, he lost track of time, the fifteen minutes being up. As the time rang loudly throughout the room, Will jumped, looking up at Mrs. Jones, who was moving to stop the timer's ringing. He looked over at Mike, who was already looking at Will. Will flushed pink, turning back to the front of the class, hoping Mike didn't catch his odd behavior.

By the time Friday had rolled around, the whole school day felt like someone slowed down every clock. It was as if maple syrup was stuck in time, making the numbers unchanging for minutes instead of seconds. It was taking forever for school to finally get out.

Once it had, Mike had caught Will before he left. The two hadn't really talked much that day, but Mike seemed to always at least say one thing to him.

"I'll see you at the party tonight?" He asked.

Will wanted to say no. Hell, every fiber of his being was telling him

to just say no. Just say that Troy Harrington was the worst peer he's ever had and move on. Just tell him that he was sick, or Jonathan was busy, just say something to get him out of going to that stupid house party.

Although Will didn't lie to people, he didn't lie to Mike.

"You sure will." He nodded firmly, hoping to himself that the expression he wore matched it. Apparently it did, when Mike grinned and nodded back at him. He gave him a wave before leaving the classroom and Will took a sigh of relief. After a few moments, he rushed out of the classroom himself.

"I just don't get it." Jane said as she drove both of them home, "Why is she so rude to him?"

The conversation they were both in was about Max, Jane being confused over why Max was acting so rude. More rude than she usually was. Of course, Will knew the answer, but he didn't have the heart to expose Max's secret like that. Max should tell her, it wasn't Will's job. "Trust me, I'm just as upset about it as you are." Will nodded.

"Mike's just such a nice guy." Jane said, a smile forming over her lips. "In Algebra today, he complimented me." She smiled. Will tried to hide the alarmed expression he wore, looking away from Jane completely and clearing his throat loudly. Why did it bother him so much? That Mike was complimenting Jane? It wasn't like he had any ownership over Mike. Mike was a person he met a few days ago, and yes, Will could admit to himself that he had a small crush on him, but other than that, Will shouldn't care.

Right?

"Yeah, he's really nice. Especially giving us an invitation to a party." Will agreed.

"Speaking of that, how do you think that's going to go?" Jane inquired, glancing over at Will. He took a moment to think it over.

"I think something terrible is going to happen, but maybe things won't be that bad." Will shrugged. As they pulled into the driveway, Jane nodded in agreement.

"We'll be fine, we always are." She reasoned with him. "Now come on, I want to eat some cookies, which means you have to bake with me." Jane smiled. Will pretended to be annoyed, groaning in mock annoyance.

"If I must." He sighed. Before either of them got out of the car, he spoke up again. "Do you still like Max?" Will asked, not really controlling what came out of his mouth.

A heavy silence filled the car. The air felt suddenly thick, suffocating Will as he waited for the answer to a question he shouldn't have asked. Jane didn't meet his eyes. She cleared her throat, and Will looked over to her, seeing a few tears pricking her eyes. "Feelings like that don't go away, Will. Not unless you really need them too." she answered. "I still like Max, maybe I even love her, but I have a chance with Mike. Maybe I can love him instead." she reasoned quietly.

"Don't give up on Max." Will said, his voice coming from a place of genuine care. He wasn't thinking of any jealous feelings, because in the moment, he felt none. "She cares. A lot more than you think she does. I think she sees Mike as a replacement." Will told Jane gently. Jane turned to him, her eyes glazed over and glossed with sadness.

"Maybe." she nodded. She took a moment, wiping her eyes and taking deep breaths, before looking back up at Will. "So how about those cookies?"

The afternoon seemed to go by quickly. The cookies were cooled and enjoyed by the family, and by the late evening dinner was served. By 9:30, both the step siblings were dressed and ready to go to the party, with the exception that they would be home by 3:15. It was reasonable, even crazy, but Joyce and Jim trusted the teenagers not to do anything beyond stupid. The car ride was quiet. They were set to first pick everyone up first. The first person they got was Max,

simply because she lived closest. In the old car, the front seat held three. Will was squished between his sister and his best friend, so needless to say, it was an awkward car ride. The next person they got was Dustin, who managed to make light of the awkwardness.

“It’s our first party, that’s exciting.” Dustin had said with a smile on his face.

“We’ve had parties.” Will replied, a hint of confusion.

“It’s our first party that doesn’t include cheesy birthday hats.” Max scoffed.

“Hey, I happen to love those.” Will looked at her with offense in his eyes.

“You’d be the only one.” Jane smiled teasingly. And before they knew it, they were all smiling and laughing, not dreading everything completely.

The next person to bring into the car was Mike, surprisingly. Jane had gotten his address during one of their classes, and Lucas was a little farther up ahead of Mike’s house. Will watched Mike come out of his house, yelling something into the house before slamming the door. Will didn’t quite hear it, but he looked upset. As soon as he got in the car, he sat next to Dustin, his arms crossed.

“Are you okay?” Will asked instantly.

Mike looked up to the front seats. “Just drive already.” He huffed, looking away. Will could barely see Mike in the mirrors, but he could tell there was something wrong.

Jane kept driving, until they made it to Lucas’s house. Lucas dressed in his best party clothes and tried much harder than Will did. He wore a patterned shirt that was black and white, with plain black slacks. He looked presentable, Will had just wore his favorite checkered shirt and a jean jacket, calling it a day.

Dustin and Lucas bickered in the back seat, Mike being caught in the middle of it. On the way to the official party, Will continuously looked back with the mirror, wanting to check on Mike. He seemed

so sad, he had the same look as a kicked puppy, and Will could tell he was repressing something. He wanted to help somehow, but knew that it was probably a lost cause for him to help. He had no idea what was wrong, and besides that, they weren't close. Not as close as Mike was with Jane. Or Lucas. Either way, Will decided that it would be intruding if he said something. Wouldn't it? He didn't know. He did know that he never wanted to see Mike Wheeler wear that hurt look ever again in his life.

The party was in full swing when they had gotten there. It wasn't crazy, There were lots of people, but amongst all those people was mostly chattering friends and the sound of a song flowing throughout the living room. As Will had expected, there were plenty of red solo cups, and plenty of already drunk teenagers.

"Well I don't know what you nerds are doing just standing around, but I'm going to get myself a drink." Max said, immediately walking away from the group. Will stared after her and debated following, although Dustin was already on it. Reluctantly, he did.

The kitchen was an entirely different atmosphere, drinks were being mixed and different music was being played. In the kitchen, it was much more chaotic. There were people coming in and out, but for the most part, everyone was way too drunk to even be standing. He spotted Dustin and Max, making his way over to the pair. "Well boys, should we take our first official party drink?" Max asked the two, pouring some mystery liquid into a red solo cup. Will looked at it hesitantly, but Dustin seemed to have no problem with drinking.

"We'll be dead anyways. Might as well have fun before the apocalypse arrives." Dustin took the cup from Max as he spoke. Max gave him a smirk and a raise of her brows, before turning to Will.

"Come on, this one is special. I think you'll like it." She coaxed.

Will looked at her, curiosity getting the best of him. "What do you mean?" He asked, tilting his head a bit. She gave a small giggle,

handing over a cup.

“Fruit punch and vodka, you like fruity things.” Max smiled, tossing him a wink. He simply rolled his eyes, taking the cup into his hands.

“To our first and last party!” Dustin cheered, holding out his cup for the other two to cheer with him. Max and Will both repeated what he said quietly and in an incoherent mumble. The three of them pathetically clinked their plastic cups together.

As soon as Will took a drink, the flavor burned down his throat. It was a weird combination of sweet, sour, and just the general feeling of being burned. “What is that? Fruit punch and acid?” He asked Max, a look of confusion on his face.

“Wrong on the acid, that’s some vodka I found mixed with Hawaiian punch.” Max shrugged, tipping her cup. “Do you like it?”

“Kind of? Not a lot.” Will told her.

Dustin patted his shoulder. “Good, that means it’s real alcohol.” he chuckled. “I’m going to go bother Lucas.” Dustin grinned at the two, before giving a small wave and being on his way.

Will took another sip, looking around the kitchen. “This party is already a nightmare.” he choked out, coughing a bit to try and relieve his throat to the foreign taste.

Max shrugged, “The only thing that upsets me is Jane being mad at me.” she confessed.

“Then fix it! You’ll regret it if you don’t.” Will told her, huffing a bit.

Max gave him a look he was unable to read, before speaking again, “William Byers, do you know something I don’t?”

Before he could answer, a familiar girl with dark brown hair and a huge grin made her way over. The smile made her nearly unrecognizable, but she soon registered in Will’s mind as Heather. “Max!” the already drunk teenager called with a smile. “Maximum Max! You.” she grinned, slumping onto the red haired girl. Max looked at her with an amused look.

“Yes Heather?” she asked.

Heather looked around, as if the kitchen wasn't crowded already, before saying quietly, “I'm fucking gay.”

The statement was followed by giggles, and Will fled the kitchen.

How could she so openly admit it? It wasn't something to go around telling people. It wasn't something to talk about to people who aren't your closest friends. It wasn't something to just say. You shouldn't say things like that, especially in public where people could hear you, right?

The thoughts plagued his mind as he turned to the living room, he saw on the couch something he wished he hadn't.

Mike and Jane were propped up against each other, Mike whispering something into Jane's ear, and his own step sister giggling at it, blushing and letting him kiss the top of her head. The sight made Will's heart ache. He downed the rest of his drink, ignoring the burning feeling, going back to get more. He didn't see the two girls when he had returned, so he simply went and made the same drink, although going heavy on the alcohol. He hoped to be wasted by his second cup, hopefully making the night more bearable. He sipped on the cup as he stood in the kitchen, eventually seeing Max come back into view. She looked over at him, and he must have been noticeably buzzed, but he barely felt it.

“Will, what the hell? How much have you had while I was gone?” Max asked.

“One and a half.” Will answered with a half shrug. He took another sip, before feeling the cup leave his hands. “Maxie! No! I have reason! Gimme the cupsies!” Will whined. Okay, he admitted to himself he must be some sort of drunk if he was saying words like ‘Cupsies.’

“Cupsises? You're wasted on one and a half? Alright, what reason?” Max rose her eyebrows. Will simply took her free hand, leading her out to the living room. “What? A bunch of other drunk teenagers?”

“The couch.” Will answered plainly, nodding to Mike and Jane. Just

as he did, the two were looking into each others eyes, slowly inching close to each other. Their faces getting close, inches away, centimeters away, just about to-

“Nope.” Max said, turning away. Her no sounded a mix of sad, horrified, but Will couldn’t look away. He watched them kiss, and felt a pang of sadness and disappointment. He turned away as well, looking at Max. She already had tears in her eyes, he knew she wasn’t going to notice when they fell. She knocked back the rest of the cup, wiping her eyes. “I’m going to find Heather. Go do shots or something.” Max told him, although she sounded distant. He watched her march through the house, before looking back at Mike and Jane. They were still kissing. Will couldn’t watch anymore. He turned away, heading to the kitchen and deciding to indeed take some shots.

Soon enough, Will found himself outside. He was laying in the grass, the night wasn’t too cold yet. The summer was still leaking into the Fall, it was still warm enough for Will to not need a thick coat on, his current jean jacket provided him with all the warmth he needed. He was surprised to see the stars so nicely from here, and not even the Harrington’s pool was tempting to the currently drunk Will Byers. He had never done anything like this, but he felt nice. He felt good, and Will hardly ever felt this way. Especially after watching his crush and his step sister kiss. Make out. Maybe go farther, God, just the thought made Will want to throw up.

And in fact, he did throw up. He leaned onto his side, vomiting in the grass, tears streaming down his face as the burning feeling came back into his throat. Throwing up will always be terrible in his book.

“Will, are you okay?” A voice said, footsteps following. Will turned back onto his other side, eventually sitting up. It was Mike. Bitterness filled Will.

“What? You’re done sucking face with my sister?” He asked harshly, crossing his arms.

“Oh, you’re so wasted!” Mike laughed. And Will would normally enjoy Mike’s laugh. Mike’s laugh was airy and the sound of pure

happiness, but he was mad at someone he's known for three days. "Come on, get out of the grass before you get your own vomit on that jacket," He smiled.

"No, really. I wanna know. Are you two what? A dating thing?" He glared. Mike gave him this look, it was a look he didn't know, but it made Will angrier because every look Mike Wheeler wore was absolutely adorable, and it was completely unfair.

"Will, we're not dating. She said she wanted to see what it would be like." He answered after a few seconds.

Will didn't buy it and looked down at the grass. "Well, what did she say?" Will questioned, not looking up and meeting his eyes.

"She said she didn't like it." Mike shrugged. That got Will's attention. He opened his mouth to say something else, but Mike had beaten him to it. "You know, I didn't like it much either." He told him. "I think it's because I had the wrong sibling." He smiled softly.

"You can't say that." Will flushed, looking away again.

Mike stared at Will puzzled, a look Will still liked on Mike. "You've barely had full conversations with me. Ones that last more than one minute. Jane is everyone's favorite. She's so kind, funny, understanding, strong, she's everything. She's someone special."

"Maybe I think you're someone special." Mike replied.

Will mocked him under his breath, earning a giggle from himself and from Mike. He frowned deeply, all sign of any happiness leaving his face. "I am no one special." He pulled at the grass.

"Will Byers, for someone as smart as you, you just said the dumbest thing I've ever heard." Mike said, directing Will's gaze to look at him with his hands. They were close now, a few inches away. Mike's hands were on Will's face. "You're special. and I'll make sure you see that, even if it's the last thing I do."

Will blushed again. Mike up close was a sight Will never wanted to look away from. He could see under the moonlight, and the light from the house, how beautiful Mike was. Like he was sculpted from

clay by a God and sent out into the world to live a normal life. The splatters of freckles on his face were similar to stars, and Will wanted to point out every constellation. He wanted to count each one. He needed to tell Mike. “Your freckles.” Was all he said.

Mike grinned at him, before breaking out into laughter, and this time, Will enjoyed Mike’s laugh, and joined in himself. “I think that you’ve had enough fun for one night. I’ll get Jane to drive you home.” Mike replied, getting off the ground and pulling the shorter boy up with him.

“But everyone else-”

“Is at home, safe.” Mike assured him. “I’ll walk, I don’t live far from here. You really need some rest.”

Will nodded, deciding against arguing. He was exhausted, and it was probably curfew soon. “Okay, don’t die for me, hm? I have to kiss you before you die. Or before I die.” He told him, not really registering what was coming out of his mouth. Mike stayed quiet for a few moments.

“I won’t be dying anytime soon.”

Notes for the Chapter:

the first notes was my attempt at a joke at my depression, but i'll try to be better about updating every Friday or Saturday, that's my plan tbh